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A
SERIOUS ADDRESS
TO
YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES,
ON THE
NECESSITY and ADVANTAGES
OF
EARLY PIETY.

By T. BRYSON.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Address, being a juvenile performance, is, with great diffidence, presented to the Public. The interesting importance of the subject, and the benevolence of the design, encourage, however, a hope, that it will not be found altogether unworthy the favorable notice, either of the objects addressed, or of parents, and such who are entrusted with the education of youth. Sentiments of piety and virtue cannot be impressed too early on the human mind. They

are the origin of respectability in society; give relish to the innocent enjoyments of this life; and happily prepare for the fruition of consummate felicity in the life to come. To the diffusion and impression of these sentiments the following pages are devoted. May the divine blessing render them successful!

A
SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS !

PROMPTED by affectionate concern for your best interests, I have ventured to solicit the favour of your attention a few moments. By natural obligation, and positive precept, it is our duty, as much as possible, to promote our mutual welfare. Influenced by this consideration, and warm with benevolent wishes for your present and future welfare, I now employ my pen ; and happy, unspeakably happy, should I think myself, if any thing that may drop from it should be honored with the least degree of success in promoting this end. *This* is the object at which I sincerely aim. An object this, which, I flatter myself, will in some degree atone for the freedom I assume, and procure from the truly candid, a ready excuse for the imperfections resulting from the incompetent abilities of the unworthy Author.

B

That period of life at which you are supposed to have arrived, is universally acknowledged to be such as exposes you, in a peculiar degree, to a multiplicity of glittering dangers, proceeding from strong and ungoverned passions, little experience, and less reflection; ambitious desires of human honors, high taste for animal gratifications, and lamentable unmindfulness of *that* account which you *must* hereafter give of your present moral conduct to the Judge of quick and dead. These are particulars which may have a lasting and an alarming influence on your real interests, both here and hereafter, and, alas! are too descriptive of the critical period of youth!

Various are the objects which at present court your attention, and tempt your pursuit. Objects suited to the prevailing dispositions of your minds. Riches exhibit irresistible charms to the sordid, who erroneously suppose that a more than ordinary share of consolidated earth would at once render its possessor affluent and happy. Fame glitters in the eyes of the ambitious, who eagerly prosecute every accomplishment which they ima-

gine suited to secure them the possession of this phantom. And enchanting Pleasure presents her *circean* cup to the sensual, many of whom run themselves out of health, wealth, and reputation, to swallow the pernicious draught. The riches, honors, and pleasures, of this world, have been represented as its three most dangerous idols; nor will those deny the justice of this representation, who believe that none can be wise for time who are fools for eternity.

I am not unconscious of the difficulty attending an attempt to persuade the objects of my address, warm with life and blooming in years, to believe, with Solomon, that all these things, and all that they comprise, are really vanity and vexation of spirit (1). In the morning of life we are apt to put a very different construction upon them. But, doubtless, he to whom riches were as plentiful and common *as the stones of the street* (2), and whose wisdom was as extensive as the *shores of the sea* (3), will be acknowledged to have

(1) Eccl. 1. 14. (2) 2 Chron. 9. 22. 27. (3) 1 Kings 4. 29.

been very capable of using experiments, and deducing just conclusions from them. And, surely, some degree of deference is due to the decision of so superior a judge.

But, however opposite, at present, your sentiments may be to those of the wisest of men,—a period *will* commence, in which this opposition shall for ever cease. For when the curtain of time shall drop, and the king of terrors hide from your enraptured view the gay objects of an alluring world, you will *then* be convinced (too late, perhaps, for any beneficial purpose) of the vanity of all sublunary things, and be constrained to acknowledge, that those only were truly wise, who employed the flying moments of a short and uncertain life in securing a blissful immortality beyond the grave.

A good, suited to your nature and duration as rational and immortal beings, is alone worthy of your principal pursuit. If any such object exists, the possession of which would infallibly secure your temporal and eternal welfare, surely you will readily acknowledge

the wisdom and propriety of securing the possession, if possible, of that object. Now such an object there is, and that object is **GODLINESS**. For an authority, which it would be impious to dispute, assures us, "that it hath the promise of the life that NOW is, and of THAT which IS TO COME (1)." The nature, necessity, and superexcellency of which, justly deserve your serious consideration.

The volume only of divine revelation contains infallible information concerning the nature of true godliness. From numerous testimonies therein, it appears essentially to consist in right knowledge of God, accompanied with suitable affections towards him.

That knowledge of God which is included in true godliness, consists in perception of the divine perfections as most admirably harmonizing in the redemption of apostate man, through the righteousness and death of the adorable Redeemer, the dignity of whose person, being "over all, God blessed for ever" (2); stamps eternal efficacy upon what

(1) 1 Tim. 4. 8.

(2) Rom. 9. 5.

he *did* and *suffered*, as the substitute of fallen man. In Jesus, "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (1). Through him, God appears at once a just God and a Saviour (2); and a discovery of him as such is the effect of the enlightening influence of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (3).

The principle whence originate suitable affections toward God, as the other constituent of true godliness, is *divine faith*. This is inseparably connected with right knowledge of God, for "they that know thy name," blessed God! "will put their trust in thee" (4). It is the property of this grace to lead its happy possessor from every vain refuge invented by the ignorance and pride of man, to the only sure refuge presented in Christ Jesus. It directs the guilty sinner to his precious blood for pardon—to his divine obedience for acceptance with God, and to the inexhaustible riches of his overflowing grace for renewing influences, to fit the soul for the employment and happi-

(1) Psa. 85. 10.

(2) Isa. 45. 21.

(3) Ephes. 1. 17.

(4) Psa. 9. 10.

ness of heaven. These blessings, enjoyed by divine faith, produce real delight—bind the affections to the infinitely glorious God in humble and fervent love, constrain to consistent and persevering obedience, and constitute at once an earnest and anticipation of the rest remaining for the people of God.

The necessity of godliness, thus described, is obvious, both from divine authority and unprejudiced reason. We are assured by the former, that “it is eternal life to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent”(1): and that in the day of judgment “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”(2); so that you must acknowledge it to be as necessary rightly to know God, as it is to escape divine vengeance and enjoy eternal life.

The same authority teaches the absolute necessity of divine faith. It is inseparably

(1) 1 John 17. 3.

(2) 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8.

connected with salvation, by the Lord of Life and Glory. Pray read and consider his own words, Mark 16. 16. They are too plain to need any comment.

Unprejudiced *reason* concurs with divine revelation in maintaining the necessity of divine faith. It is the property of this grace to *receive* and *enjoy* the great salvation accomplished by Christ, and revealed in the gospel. Now, is it possible to be saved without the effectual *application* of salvation to the soul? Can a medicine, however sovereign, benefit a patient unadministered or unenjoyed? Can *mere information* of food feed your bodies; or of Christ and Christianity save your souls? A moment's reflection will convince you that these are impossibilities. The destructive error of thousands, is, an irrational supposition, that uninfluential knowledge, joined to merely external profession of religion, is sufficient for their salvation. Alas! how dangerously ignorant are such persons of true religion!

Besides, true faith purifies the heart (1),

(1) Acts 15. 9.

and the *pure in heart* alone shall see God (1).
Without holiness no man shall see the Lord (2).

Pure are the joys above the skies,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lips, nor envious eyes,
Can see or taste the bliss.

Those holy gates for ever bar,
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admission there
But follow'rs of the Lamb.

The purity of the happiness of heaven renders purity of heart absolutely necessary in all who would enjoy it, seeing happiness necessarily pre-supposes agreement between our dispositions and those objects which render us happy. There is such a contrariety subsisting between our natural dispositions, and that which constitutes the happiness of heaven, that, without a change in the *former*, the enjoyment of the *latter* is impossible. This is the great doctrine of

(1) Mat. 5. 8.

(2) Heb. 12. 14.

the Christian regeneration, inculcated by our Lord. And which he assures us *must* take place, in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven(1). The superficial and prejudiced infidel may stigmatize this doctrine as fanatic; but, to the candid reflections of sound reason, I venture to affirm, that few truths will appear more obvious or more important. May it appear so to you!

The *superexcellency* of godliness is demonstrable from many topics; but, at present, I shall briefly point out those only of honor, profit, pleasure, and the perpetuity of each.

First, it is *honorable*; honorable in its origin, nature, fruits, and final issue. It *originates* in the regenerating grace of God, and its happy subject is born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (2). In its *nature*, it consists in conformity to the moral image of the ever blessed God himself. It is the beauty and

(1) 1 John 3. 3, 7.

(2) John 1. 13.

glory of angels, and the spirits of just men, now perfect in heaven. Its immediate *fruit* is communion and fellowship with Him, in whose presence is fulness of joy, at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore (1). It associates, in character, dignity, and privilege, its possessor with the wisest and best of men in every age—with prophets and apostles, yea, with angels themselves (2). And it *terminates* in the full fruition of the shoreless ocean of all happiness, in rapturous concert, with saints and angels for ever! What honors are comparable to these? Compared with these, “is not all that wealth can purchase, all that grandeur can bestow, somewhat like those glittering bubbles, which, when viewed are emptiness, when grasped are nothing?”

It is also *profitable*. It has the promise of the life that *now is*. The promises of a faithful God, secure to such as are truly godly, a competence of the good things of *this* life,

(1) John 1. 3. Psa. 16. 11.

(2) See Ephes. 2. 19. Heb. 12. 22, 24.

with his blessing upon them(1). He, who clothes with inimitable beauty the lilies of the field, and bountifully feeds the fowls of the air, will not, *cannot*, deny his own children raiment and food convenient for them(2). By no precarious tenure do they possess these blessings. Their bread *shall* be given, their waters *shall* be sure(3). And when a divinely wise plan requires the bestowment of a *scanty* portion of temporal blessings, true contentment, and singular interpositions of divine Providence, amply compensate the deficiency.

But the riches of the real Christian consist chiefly in what is spiritual and immortal. In what respects *that life which is to come*. In heaven the real Christian hath treasures unfathomably deep, and such as no moth nor rust can corrupt, and where no thief can break through to steal(4). The divine favor, the divine image, communion with God, fountains of living water, trees of life, delightful society with saints and angels, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that

(1) Psa. 37. 3, 16.

(2) Mat. 6. 25,—34.

(3) Isa. 33. 16.

(4) Mat. 6. 20.

fadeth not away, reserved for all who fight the good fight of faith. These, these are the incomparable riches of those who possess true godliness. The votaries of Mammon, who trust in their wealth, and boast themselves of the multitude of their riches, whose inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations, and call their lands after their own names(1), are mean *beggars* compared with the real Christian. May you, by securing an interest in the divine Redeemer, lay up treasures in heaven for your future enjoyment when all earthly possessions will leave you possessed of nothing but—a shroud and a coffin.

In opposition to the erroneous sentiments of such who are ignorant of real godliness, I add, that *pleasure* inseparably attends her. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace(2). You have not the least doubt, but that the most pure and substantial pleasures are enjoyed in heaven; and

(1) Psa. 49. 6, 11,

(2) Prov. 3. 17.

whence do these pleasures arise but from *real* religion? *This* is their only source. Now, the same cause will ever produce the same effect; and, consequently, in proportion to the degree in which real religion is possessed, true pleasure will be enjoyed. Is it not therefore a proof, a strong proof, of gross ignorance, or vitiated taste, to deny or disrelish those pleasures which render the blessed inhabitants of heaven completely happy? The real Christian enjoys pleasures of the same *nature*, though in a very inferior *degree*, to what are enjoyed in heaven. His pleasures arise from living faith in his adorable Redeemer, purity of heart, the exercise of Christian graces, moral virtues, and social affections; conscious interest in divine favor, and well-founded hopes of the perfect enjoyment of consummate felicity throughout the revolutions of everlasting ages. What are all the flashes of giddy mirth, the effusions of sensual joy, the vain delights arising from the pomp and parade of what is termed high life, compared with these enjoyments?

To these commendatory and inseparable attendants on true godliness, permit me to add, their *perpetuity*. Were you in full possession of all the riches, honors, and pleasures of this life, you are conscious that an everlasting separation *must* take place between you and them? At whatever distance your fond wishes may place that evil day in which you will be torn from those alluring objects which now engross your principal concern,—you know it *will* come, and *may* come much sooner than you are aware. Is it consistent, either with your own true interest, or the proper exercise of even the lowest degree of reason, to confine your regard to such objects as you must shortly for ever leave? Surely no! Religion's exalted prerogatives alone are entitled to your supreme regard. The honors she confers, last for ever. No envious breath can finally blast the laurels of the Christian. His crown of glory fades not away (1). When superb monuments of brass and marble shall mix with the dust they cover, those, whose names are

(1) 1 Cor. 9. 25.

recorded in the book of Life, shall flourish in a state of immortal youth, and never be erased out of those annals of eternal fame. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance(1). Their dignity will be clearly manifested to assembled worlds in the last day, when their now vile bodies shall be metamorphosed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body—seated at his right hand, and welcomed to that kingdom which was prepared for them from before the foundation of the world(2).

Equally permanent are the Christian's riches. He is rich towards God with riches suitable to his nature, and lasting as his duration. Worldly riches are neither. A crown of gold cannot cure the aching head that wears it. No riches, no possessions, can procure pardon or peace with God, without which, man, as a guilty and polluted being, cannot but be miserable. But the real Christian, in the glorious object of his faith, possesses suitable, unsearchable, and immortal treasures. Treasures of wisdom and knowledge(3). Treasures of pardoning mercy and peace which passeth all

(1) Psa. 112. 6. (2) Mat. 25. 34, (3) Col. 2. 3.

understanding. Treasures of rich grace producing well-founded hopes of endless glory, and purifying influence to prepare for the fruition of those hopes. In a word, real Christians, as the adopted and regenerated sons of God, are heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (1).

The pleasures arising from real religion are also as lasting as they are substantial. That river of life and pleasure whose streams gladden the city of God, perpetually flows (2). While others with sordid anxiety are inquiring after "any good," real Christians are desirous alone of the light of the divine countenance, as infinitely preferable to all sublunary joys. The enjoyment of this object of their warmest wishes induces them to prefer the meanest office in the house of their God (where this happiness is most enjoyed) to the residing in the most stately dwellings of ungodliness (3): yea, they sometimes possess joy unspeakable and full of glory (4). And after

(1) Rom. 8. 17. (2) Psa. 36. 8. & 46. 4.

(3) Psa. 84. 10. (4) 1 Pet. 1. 8.

all, their present enjoyments are no more than a *drop* from the ocean of eternal bliss in reserve for them in heaven.

“There, where their blessed Jesus reigns,
In heaven’s unmeasur’d space,
They’ll spend a long eternity
In pleasure and in praise.”

Eye hath not seen, nor hath the ear heard, nor can the heart conceive, what pleasures God hath appointed for those who love him(1). No alloy in those pleasures, no period to their duration. The soul’s union with God in its noblest faculties, the understanding and the will, eternally delights the former with perfect knowledge, the latter with perfect love.

And shall the transitory pleasures of vice and vanity, which end in everlasting sorrow(2), come in competition with these divine delights? Shall the pleasures which at last fill the soul with anguish, and often the body with disease, be preferred to those which are rational, pure,

(1) Cor. 2. 9.

(2) Isa. 50. 11.

and permanent? Such as render faints and angels completely happy? — Forbid it, gracious God! and produce a divine taste for what is divinely excellent!

And now, my young Friends, upon a serious and candid review of this representation of true godliness, and the advantages attending it, is it not infinitely worthy of your cordial choice? Can you forbear acquiescing in the decision of unerring wisdom, in considering it as the *better part* (1), and pursuing it accordingly?

“ Religion should your thoughts engage

Amidst your youthful bloom,

’Twill fit you for declining age,

And for the awful tomb.”

She alone can support and compose in the awful moments of dissolution; and, oh! how soon may you need her benign influence for those purposes! But, can you reasonably expect that she will confer her favors on

(1) Luke 10. 42.

you in extremity, if you disregard her counsels in prosperity? Rather, have you not reason to fear, if you persist to treat her with impious disregard, that she will fully execute her threatenings against you, and laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh (1)?

That this may not prove your unhappy lot, labour to procure that knowledge of, which will necessarily produce superlative esteem for her. No object besides deserves, comparatively, a single wish. How vain and uncertain are all objects beside! How unworthy the ardor and anxiety which they occasion! What is the world, with all its vanities, now, to those who lie mouldering in their graves? What it is to them, it *will* shortly be to us all; and nothing remain beyond the grave but the happy or miserable consequences of our possession or want of real religion. Life is a seed time. And according to the seed now sown, such must the future harvest be. Should it be a matter of indifference with you what seed you now sow,

(1) Prov. i. 26.

or what harvest you must hereafter reap?—Were you mere animals, possessing only a human form, but destitute of immortal souls, you could not be culpable for neglecting what concerns them. But, as “creatures immortal, that must, necessarily, stand the most important and incomprehensible consequences of your own doubtful conduct for ever,” it is little, if any thing, short of insanity, to be indifferent about your immortal interests. Nothing short of absolute demonstration that the religion taught in the Bible is false or frivolous can justify your rejection or neglect of it. But, who of all the sons of infidelity have ever been able (tho’ their vicious lives have made it their interest) to produce such evidence? On the contrary, has not the rack of nature extorted from the dying lips of thousands of them confessions in favor of true religion? Even in life, when visited by serious thought (which *will* sometimes intrude), bad men, like him whom they serve, “believe and tremble (1).”—I address you on the generous supposition of your being persons of good sense. As such, you are sensible that in all

(1) James 2. 19.

competitions, where our interest is concerned, reason teaches us to choose *that* side on which we run the least hazard. You are conscious, upon a moment's reflection, that, with regard to our *spiritual* interests, *religion* is that side. However differently minded men may have been on this great subject during that vivacity of spirits which health and prosperity inspire, no sooner does sickness or solitude awaken the powers of serious reflection, than they generally agree in their sentiments concerning the importance of religion, and in their application to it for that relief which is denied by every other source. What can never be sufficiently lamented, is, that very often this application is deferred till 'tis too late to succeed, rendering their dying confessions of no other use than to *confirm* those in their choice, who have seasonably chosen the *better part*; and to render inexcusable such who persist in their refusal of this part.—May you beware that dangerous rock against which so many have been wrecked!

The different characters of the friends and of the foes of real religion afford no incon-

fiderable evidence of its reality and importance. Who, in all ages, have been its enemies? Generally the infidel and profligate part of mankind. Such who never studied it, perhaps a day, or bowed the knee to heaven for true wisdom an hour of their lives. And is there any regard due to *such* despicable judges? Is it any reproach to differ from *such* characters in principle and in practice, and be the objects of their impious contempt and scorn for following the tract of prophets, and apostles, yea, of the Son of God himself? For these, and the wisest and best of men in every age, have been the real friends of religion. Now, had you not infinitely better be on the side of the truly good who have espoused a cause which *must* finally prevail and prosper, than continue on the side of the corrupt many whose broad road leads to and terminates in everlasting infamy and destruction? A small degree of reflection might be supposed sufficient to prevent all hesitation on a subject of such infinite importance, and determine a seasonable choice of what you *must* possess in order to be eternally happy.

Remember then, O remember, your Creator in the days of your youth(1). Let your youthful vigour be employed in securing the divine favor, and conformity to the divine image. Squander not away your precious time in the vanities and vices of this corrupt age, but rather seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness(2). Pursue that line of life which alone can produce pleasurable reflection in the solemn moments of dissolution, and plant not afore-hand your dying pillow with thorns. Do not scornfully disregard these friendly admonitions, and obstinately persist to walk in the ways of your own corrupt hearts, and according to the sight of your own eyes; for know, scorers, that for all these things God *will* bring you into judgement(3). You cannot avoid falling into the hands of the living God at last, and what treatment can you expect from his insulted Majesty, if you continue your hostilities against his awful authority? O that you would be persuaded to seek him *while* he may be found, and provoke him not to resolve in awful displeasure that you shall never

(1) Ecc. 12. 1. (2) Mat. 6. 33. (3) Ecc. 11. 9.

enter into his rest. Should he do so—better for you if you had never been born.

It is unalterably appointed unto all men once to die, and *after* death the judgement⁽¹⁾. Anticipate by serious reflection the solemn moments of dissolution. Impartially inquire what can support and console you when your heart and flesh shall fail. When your beauty, vigor, and vivacity, are gone, and succeeded by ghastly deformity, weakness, and guilty sorrow—when the body is bathed in the cold sweats of death, and the deep racking pang rending asunder the soul from it—when an alarmed conscience upon a retrospective view of a mispent life, wherein eternity and its important concerns were forgot and disregarded, begins to operate *as a never dying worm*, and every prospect of the *future* appals with horror—what, O what would you not part with then for the happy prerogatives of the truly righteous in those awful moments?—for that divine support, for those exalted and exalting hopes of a blissful immortality, which assuage the ago-

(1) Heb. 9. 27.

nies, and sweeten to them the bitter cup of death.—There is only one way of dying the death of the righteous, and that is—by previously living their *life*. The life they live is a life of faith, and of humble love to God. Faith and love united, are as essential to the constitution of a real Christian, as the union of soul and body to that of a human being. May you humbly implore the bestowment of these prime graces! *Now* is the accepted time. O improve the favorable gales of opportunity before they are irrecoverably gone!

Say not, “it is time enough yet to think of these things.” Death’s arrows are perpetually flying at dreadful random among the sons of men, and youth and age promiscuous croud the tomb. Besides, were you *sure* of long life, how disingenuous, how monstrous, would it be to spend the prime of your years in folly and vice, and reserve nothing for God and godliness but the remains of a mispent life? Can you reasonably suppose *such* a sacrifice would prove acceptable? Have you not rather reason to believe that such offerings would be rejected with divine disdain,

and the impious offerers sent to reap in hell the fruits of their presumptuous impiety on earth? For God's sake, run not the dreadful risk. If religion reduced you to the necessity of even begging bread, you had better beg bread with Lazarus on earth, and afterwards arrive in heaven; than enjoy all the honors and luxuries of life, and afterwards beg in vain for a drop of water to cool your tongues in inextinguishable flames. But, you have been already informed that religion is as friendly to your temporal as to your eternal interests; and, consequently, the more unreasonable is your opposition to, or neglect of it. It is the one thing *needful*, and shall it be treated as if it were the only thing *needless*? Shall the scoffs and sneers of profane infidels outweigh the respectable testimonies of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, in favor of true religion? Shall the transitory pleasures of sin, which terminate in endless sorrow, be preferred to that pure and permanent felicity procured by the Lord of life and glory, and freely presented to you in his Gospel? Is religion, think you, only a refinement of state policy, employed to keep the

vulgar world in awe, that their boasted superiors might revel and riot without control? Who ever found it so on a death-bed? No mortal ever lived but found at last, that, of all realities, religion was the most real. Will nothing convince you that the great God is in awful earnest with you, however you may trifle with him? Will you be convinced by neither Moses nor the prophets, nor the rising of one, even the Son of God himself, from the dead? Will nothing but the actual infliction of threatened vengeance convince you of the reality of it? If so, there is reason to fear that you *will* be thus convinced. God forbid this should prove your dreadful portion! For sin, God is most justly displeased, and his displeasure exposes to the bitter pains of eternal death. Therefore, because there is wrath, beware, lest he take thee away with his stroke; then—a great ransom cannot deliver thee (1).

Permit me to conclude this address with offering you some advice, the goodness of which I submit to your own understandings.

(1) Job 36. 18.

In the first place, allow me to recommend peculiar care in your choice of *companions*. Evil communication is universally allowed to corrupt good manners. He who walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed (1). As cautiously as you would avoid persons spotted by the plague, avoid the society of those petulant fops and flirts who seem immersed in thoughtless dissipation, and treat with impious contempt every thing serious and sacred to religion. Select for your associates those who are distinguished for virtuous modesty and pious inclinations.—Employ your own powers of thought and reflection. Learn seriously to think *what* you are, and *whither* you are going. Sinful immortals, hastening to an awful eternity, consider the certainty of death and judgement, and the preparation necessary for those unavoidable events. Never exclude from your thoughts what you cannot prevent commencing.—Be not, O be not ashamed to bow the knee to the only wise God for divine wisdom and understanding. The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man

(1) Prov. 13. 20.

to direct his own steps. How can you expect to escape the innumerable dangers to which you are ever exposed, if heavenly wisdom prove not your guide? Without divine favor you cannot reasonably expect to prosper, either here or hereafter; and surely it is a reasonable service to implore that favor! If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God (1).

Let the sacred Scripture be your daily companion. Make the same use of it that the mariner does of his chart and compass at sea. Regulate your principles and practices by its divine truths and injunctions. Those are in danger of an everlasting shipwreck who lay it aside unregarded. Search then the Scriptures, for they testify of Him by whom alone we can have eternal life. Where-withal shall young persons cleanse their way, but by taking good heed thereto, according to God's word (2)?

(1) Prov. 2. 2---5.

(2) Psa. 119. 9.

Lastly, I intreat you to observe religiously the Lord's day, and the ordinances of public worship. Breaking the Sabbath by the impetuous pursuit of pleasures, has proved the fatal forerunner of the ruin of thousands. It is a manifest breach of an express command, and shall not God visit in displeasure those who daringly trample under foot his awful authority revealed therein?—In your attendance on religious ordinances, take heed *what* you hear, and learn to distinguish, in sacred as well as in civil concerns, truth from error, reality from resemblance.—I think you will candidly acknowledge these parts of advice to be *good*. If you *yourselves* are good, or are *desirous* of being so, you will therefore take the advice here offered. May divine grace enable you to do so! In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand (1). Heaven is a prize worth every effort that can be used to obtain it. *None* ever repented seeking it too soon or too much, but thousands for their criminal neglect of it. Avoid their unhappy example, and follow the divine counsel which a great and good Prince, a little before his death,

1) Eccl. 11. 6.

gave to his own son. " Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : if thou seek him, he *will* be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will *cast* thee off *for ever*" (1).

(1) 1 Chron. 28. 9.

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